

## **Assembly Majority Leader Torrico's 2008 Legislative Highlights**

This year I introduced a comprehensive package of bills to tackle some of the key challenges facing Californians, such as foreclosures, the cost of higher education, cancer prevention and research, and public safety. Ten of these bills were approved by the state Legislature, many with bipartisan support. Unfortunately, four were vetoed by the Governor despite the help they would have provided to homeowners, renters, parents and teachers.

Here are a few of the bills and a brief description of what they would accomplish.

### **AB 2518: California Cancer Center Research Fund**

Currently more than one million Californians have cancer and an additional 142,000 people in our state will be diagnosed with a form of cancer in 2008. AB 2518 adds the California Cancer Center Research Fund to the state income tax return form's voluntary contributions section. Voluntary contributions will go toward increasing cancer prevention strategies, new cancer research and helping survivors live longer, stronger and better lives. **Signed by Governor.**

### **AB 2917: Emergency Medical Technician Background Checks**

A series of reports detailed how EMTs with inadequate training and criminal histories were slipping through the cracks and endangering the lives of people in need of emergency medical attention. Although these service providers are critical to the health and well being of Californians, our state did not have a statewide standard for background checks or a repository of information regarding the certification status of EMTs. AB 2917 requires mandatory background checks prior to certification or re-certification and establishes a central EMT and paramedic registry. **Signed by Governor.**

### **AB 2555: Parental Notification of State Special Schools**

We are fortunate to have the California School for the Blind and California School for the Deaf located in our community. However, across California many families with blind or deaf children have expressed that their school districts did not make them aware of the option to send their children to these fine campuses. AB 2555 provides parents of students who are visually impaired or hearing impaired, information on the options of state special schools when the pupil first enters the special education system. **Signed by Governor.**

### **AB 2604: Homebuilding Fee Deferral Bill**

California's homebuilding industry is down 39 percent from just a year ago and this key component of our state's economy is expected to struggle in the months ahead. This means fewer construction jobs for California workers. In addition to the tight credit market caused by the foreclosure crisis, homebuilders are also having difficulty financing the payment of impact fees, which run thousands of dollars per house. AB 2604

encourages cities and counties to defer the collection of development impact fees until certificate of occupancy, final inspection or close of escrow. Deferring the fees will address a significant factor affecting the downturn in the homebuilding industry. **Signed by Governor.**

#### **AB 158: Tribal Gaming Casino Mitigation Funding**

Funding to help local governments mitigate impacts caused by tribal casinos was vetoed in last year's budget due to concerns the funds were being used for other law enforcement purposes. AB 158 restores \$30 million in funding and incorporates recommendations proposed by the state auditor to ensure that local governments receiving these grants only fund projects that directly mitigate tribal casino impacts. **Signed by Governor.**

#### **AB 529: Home Owner Protection Bill**

The mortgage crisis has devastated California. Too many of our residents have lost their homes because they did not know that huge increases in their payments were imminent. AB 529 sought to remedy that by requiring mortgage providers to notify home owners at least 90 days in advance of their initial rate change. **Vetoed by Governor.**

#### **AB 2586: Renter Foreclosure Protection Bill**

About one in five foreclosed single family homes are occupied by renters. These hidden victims of the mortgage crisis are often the last to know their residence is in foreclosure. They must scramble to keep the utilities on while looking for new housing. AB 529 would have protected their security deposits, strengthened notification requirements and informed renters of their rights and responsibilities. **Vetoed by Governor.**

#### **AB 2262 – Child Protection – Safe Surrender**

Over the past 5 years, literally hundreds of unwanted babies have been dropped off at emergency rooms throughout California. Tragically, many other newborns have been abandoned in trash cans, open fields, bushes, or other unsafe places. AB 2262 would have saved babies lives by allowing mothers up to seven days after the birth of the baby to “safely surrender” the baby to an emergency room or fire station with no questions asked. It also incorporated recommendations from a state audit to eliminate misclassifications, and inadequate direction to counties. **Vetoed by Governor.**

#### **AB 1112 – Bonds for Teacher Rental Housing**

One of the most important factors in determining student success in our schools is the quality of the teacher in front of the classroom. Unfortunately, too many of our best and brightest teachers are priced out of the residential markets in the very neighborhoods where they teach. AB 1112 would have allowed school districts and community college districts, with the approval of at least two-thirds of district voters, to issue bonds to construct or acquire rental housing for teachers and other district employees. **Vetoed by Governor.**